



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

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Elder Abuse Prevention Month Observed in May

Abuse hurts at any age

Richmond, VA — Governor Tim Kaine recognized May as Elder Abuse Prevention Month, signing a proclamation that included information that “during the month of May, all Virginians are encouraged to remember victims of elder abuse and their families, to promote the programs and organizations that serve them, and to participate in community efforts to improve the safety and well-being of all people throughout the Commonwealth.”

May is Older Americans’ Month and is also designated Elder Abuse Prevention Month. Each year, nearly two million Americans are victims of adult abuse in domestic settings.

More than 12,000 reports of adult abuse in Virginia were investigated by Adult Protective Services (APS) in 2005. These cases of mistreatment of frail or incapacitated persons were substantiated in 61 percent of the cases.

“The most likely victims in Virginia are women, persons age 75 or older, individuals who are isolated and dependent on others for care,” said APS Program Manager Gail Nardi.

There are many types of adult abuse. They include: physical abuse — intentional infliction of physical pain or injury; mental abuse — intentional infliction of mental anguish by threats, intimidation, humiliation or other means; sexual abuse — intentional infliction of unwanted sexual activity; neglect — lack of necessary assistance to stay physically and mentally healthy; self-neglect — failure to provide one’s self with necessities such as food, clothing, shelter, needed medical care or financial management; and, financial exploitation — illegal use of an incapacitated adult’s resources for another’s profit or advantage.

Many adult perpetrators are family members, some pushed to the brink by the care of their elder parents or spouse. In 2005, in Virginia, the greatest numbers of reports to APS were for elders living with a spouse or relative, followed by elders living alone.

The designation of May as Elder Abuse Prevention Month is focused on informing Virginia’s citizens of adult abuse and the role they can play in combating this abuse. To report suspected abuse, neglect or exploitation of older or incapacitated adults, contact the local department of social services or call the toll-free hotline at (888) 832-3858.

For more information, please visit <http://www.dss.virginia.gov/family/aps.html>. For direct questions, suggestions or requests for additional information, contact the Virginia Department of Social Services, Adult Services Program at (804) 726-7533.

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